

Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 14, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Peter Jessop, Chair, in the Community Room at the Police Department.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Paris Boice, Lynda Faye, Peter Jessop, Chair; Ellen Kosmer, Jim Oldham, Mary Streeter, Vice Chair; Stan Ziomek

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Sandra Anderson, Marilyn Blaustein

STAFF / OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sonia Aldrich, Dave Ziomek, Diana Stein, Select Board liaison, Kristin DeBoer of Kestrel Trust, Carolyn Holstein Carol Gray, Alan Root, Jim Wald, Rob Kusner, Adrienne Terrizzi, Sonia Sofield, Janet McGowan, Kevin Eddings, and other members of the community.

AGENDA

- Discuss proposals and vote
- Set agenda for next meeting
- Policy discussion on timeline of project completion
- Topics the Chair did not reasonably anticipate 48 hours before the meeting
- Approve any minutes

DISCUSSION

Peter announced that this is Lynda's last CPAC meeting as Historical Committee representative and he expressed appreciation for her service.

Review Financial status of the fund – Peter said we have firm financial numbers now. DOR said that the State match this year is 26%. We have a total of \$610,970 that we can recommend to Town Meeting for projects. Of that 164,087 is recommended for Debt Service. Last time we voted \$10,000 for Surveys and Appraisals, \$30,000 partial funding for the Mill River Recreation Area improvements, and \$200,000 for administrative expenses. That leaves \$404,883 left for new projects.

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION REQUESTS

Discussion of the South East Street/Rock Farm property. - a purchase by the Town of a 7.5 acre parcel on South East Street priced at \$501,000, which would have a Conservation Restriction on 5 acres next to the Rail Trail, with 2 house lots to be sold off for \$200,000 or more. Dave Ziomek introduced Kristen DeBoer of Kestrel Trust, who presented the role of the Trust in helping to acquire funding for acquisition of the property. She noted the interests of the Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in the property and its offer of \$100,000 toward its acquisition. Dave said the DCR would hold the Conservation Restriction. Kristin also noted the overwhelming public concern to acquire the property. She requested \$125,000 in CPA funds. \$75,000 would come from private fundraising by Kestrel and the South Amherst Conservation Association (SACA). She stated that an anonymous donor would contribute \$25,000 in matching funds. Carol Gray stated that SACA had \$19,000 in pledges. Combined with the \$25,000, \$31,000 remains to be raised. The house lots together were appraised at \$200,000. Any price changes may reduce the CPA request accordingly. Several members of the community spoke in support, including Alan Root a photographer who referred to the importance of preserving views and landscape.

Discussion of Brunelle Property – Dave Ziomek presented the acquisition of the Brunelle property off Potwine, about 18 acres, Phase 1 of purchase for \$156,000. Kestrel would hold the Conservation Restriction on this property.

Discussion of the North Common Restoration Project – Dave Ziomek stated that the Town will explore options with the Historic Commission to develop plans and will possibly come back to CPA with a more defined proposal. He noted that Town Counsel says that this is an allowable use of CPA funds.

HISTORIC COMMISSION REQUESTS

Discussion of funding request of \$106,000 from the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst for restoration of the Tiffany, *Angel of the Lilies*, stained glass window. Carolyn Holstein and other representatives from the church spoke of the urgent necessity for restoration of the window. They presented information on the company selected to do the work. They also spoke to their efforts to obtain funding from other sources. The window will be restored and reinstalled once the building renovation is complete. Jim Oldham asked about public access to see the window and was assured that there is now, and will be, ample opportunity for the public to view the window. Lynda noted that the window is a tourist draw. Mary commented that a grant agreement could clearly spell out the timeline for reinstallation or the money would have to be returned to the CPA fund.

HOUSING REQUESTS

The previously discussed request for \$110,000 to upgrade and bring into code the low income Ann Whalen apartments was revisited. Chair, Peter Jessop, who is a member of the Housing Authority Board, brought up the question of whether or not the Ann Whalen proposal qualified, under CPA guidelines, for funding since the property was not purchased with CPA funds. After much discussion it was decided to refer that to town counsel for clarification.

VOTE ON FUNDING

Jim moved, Mary seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to recommend funding in the following amounts:

South East Street/Rock Farm - \$125,000

Potwine Lane/Brunelle Property – \$156,000

The Tiffany Window – \$106,000

Amherst Media to preserve electronic recordings – \$53,994

Jones Library roof repair – \$14,000

Amherst Historical Society to conserve Emily Dickinson's dress and for storage equipment – \$21,401

Improvements at the Mill River Recreation Area – \$60,000

The committee will vote on the \$110,000 in renovations to the Ann Whalen Apartments at our next meeting.

The Rock Farm request of \$125,000 would be bonded as would (if it is within CPA guidelines) the Ann Whalen Apts. rehabilitation in the amount of \$110,000.

Paris moved and Stan seconded a motion to not recommend the Community Field Master Plan (\$25,000), The North Common restoration (\$159,000), the smaller amounts originally requested for the South East Street Rock Farm, and the housing request by Habitat (\$80,000), which was not approved because the plans for the Hawthorne property house and its demolition are still incomplete. Voted unanimously.

POLICY DISCUSSION ON TIMELINE OF PROJECT COMPLETION

The committee took up the question of how to deal with projects that have been funded many years ago but which have not been completed, or even begun, thus encumbering the funds. Though it was discussed that since there is no policy now in place regarding any timeline for completion, it would be inappropriate for CPA to retroactively demand return of those funds. However, it was also decided that CPA should, going forward, develop a grant agreement policy that would require that funds not expended by a certain time be returned to the CPA general fund. Those funds could then be used for other project requests. Annual progress reports would also be included. Mary Streeter offered to look into draft agreements and draft such an agreement for Amherst. Ellen Kosmer offered to work with her on this and bring it to the next CPA meeting for consideration by the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Peter, seconded by Stan, to adjourn at 8:44pm. Voted unanimously.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be March 28, 2013 at 7:00 pm in the Community Room at the Police Station.

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

- Agenda, 1 page
- Spreadsheet "Financial Status for CPAC Funds", 3/13/2013, 1 page
- Draft of CPAC FY 2014 recommendations to Town Meeting, 3/13/2013, 1 page
- Letter from Shirin Everett, Town Counsel, on use of CPA funds, North Common, Feb 24, 2013, 3 pages
- Webpage from Community Preservation Coalition on Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties 1 page
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, 1 page
- Letter from Carolyn Holstein on efforts to secure funding for Tiffany window 3/12/2013, 1 page
- Email from Alan Root 3/13/2013 on importance of Rock Farm
- Memo and map from Kristin DeBoer of Kestrel Trust on South East St proposal, 3/14/13, 2 pages

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Kosmer, acting clerk

Approved May 29, 2013